

Young People's Society

GREAT MISSIONARY BOOKS.

Topic for Sunday, March 28: Great Missionary Books, Home and Foreign. Isaiah 32: 6-12.

DAILY READINGS.

Monday: The Book of Jonah. Jonah 4.

Tuesday: The Book of Daniel. Daniel 2: 28-45.

Wednesday: Ruth, the immigrant. Ruth 1: 15-22.

Thursday: The Book of John. John 3: 16; 20: 30, 31.

Friday: The Book of Acts. Acts 1: 6-12.

Saturday: The Book of the Revelation. Revelation 11: 15; 22: 1-5.

The Bible is the first book of all as a "missionary book." From Genesis down it is full of missionary spirit and principles.

First of all it offers and teaches a world-wide religion, a faith which knows no bounds. It provides a gospel that is for both Jew and Greek.

As specimens of its religion and of the nature of its covenant, it brings in Tamar the Canaanitess, Rahab of Jericho, Ruth of Moab, Bathsheba the Hittite, and puts them in the very line of Christ.

It tells of the mission work of the little Hebrew maid, a captive in Syria, of Christ and the centurion, of Jesus in the coasts of Tyre and Sidon, Caesarea Philippi, Decapolis, Samaria, and Perea.

It gives the scene of the housetop in Joppa, the vision of the sheet let down from heaven, of the call of the messengers at the tanner's door, of Peter's immediate journey to the house of Cornelius.

It gives the whole Book of Jonah, devoted to the message of grace to a Gentile city, an account of the repentance and saving of Nineveh, and of God's rebuke of his servant Jonah because of Jonah's grief that Nineveh was saved.

At the forefront of all, however, in the Bible, in the way of a missionary record or book, stands the narrative of the three great missionary tours of the Apostle Paul, brief, but giving glimpses of a work rich, fruitful, and clearly showing the true nature of such work.

Of books of men, there are two classes to be selected from, the one being of those discussing the principles of missions, the other being of those which describe actual missionary work. Of the first, one cannot find a better than our own Dr. T. C. Johnson's lately published "Introduction to Christian Missions."

Dr. James S. Dennis' great work on missions deals with both the principles and results of missions, showing especially what they have done for the uplifting of men, the revolutionizing of nations, the betterment of the social, civic, and economic conditions of mankind. Such a study is of rare value.

All the books covering the lives of missionaries and describing their work in its details are, of course, very modern. The biographies of Livingstone, Moffatt, Mackay, Bishop Hannington, Chalmers, Morrison, Paton, Selwyn, Heber, Martyn, Carey, Judson, Boardman, Duff, Brainerd, and many others will be found thrillingly interesting and illuminating.

The little books supplied by our own Committee of Foreign Missions for Mission Study Classes are admirable and very moderate in price. They may be had dealing with the several countries in which we have special interest. Where faithfully used they have been found most effective in stimulating interest and giving information.

Prayer Meeting

TOPIC—DOING ALL TO THE GLORY OF GOD.

1 Cor. 10: 27-33.

For Week Beginning March 21.

Though the trend of the discourse in this part of the Epistle is somewhat tedious and involved, its meaning is apparent. The supreme rule of conduct for all Christians was that their conduct in all things was to be of such a character as to show the excellency of the gospel, that others might be influenced to embrace it, so that Christ might be known, honored and glorified by them. Whatever conduct or policy might hinder this supreme end was to be avoided. Every pursuit, interest and privilege was to be made subordinate and indeed subservient to this highest end. They were to carefully avoid placing stumbling blocks, however innocent in themselves, in the way of either Jew or Gentile. The hindrance might be mainly due to the weakness or even the folly of a misguided brother, yet the instructed Christian was to avoid using the liberty which his intelligence assured him of, as a means of causing his weak brother to stumble. "Let no man seek his own, but each his neighbor's good."

The occasion of the discrimination here made was 'a preceding discussion of the sin of joining with idolaters in their feasts at the temples of their idols. That conduct was condemned as an act of communion with the idol in its worship, at least in form and appearance, just as partaking of "the cup of blessing" was the communion of the blood of Christ. Having disposed of that question by showing that feasting in the idol temples was a direct act of idolatry, the apostle advances to the discussion of the abuse of liberty in the use of those things which are in themselves lawful. These, while lawful, might not be expedient; while consistent with the dictate of their own enlightened consciences, might give offense to another's conscience. The brethren at Corinth were therefore not to minister to their own indulgence exclusively, or chiefly, but to consider the spiritual advantage of their brethren, for whose greater good they might well forego their own inferior gratification.

Whatever they bought in the market might be used as food, even though it had first been used as an offering to idols, provided the question of its religious use was not raised; because it was a part of God's bounty. "The earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof." Also in enjoying the hospitality of a friend the same liberty was to be exercised. But if a misguided zealot should object, by saying, "This is offered in sacrifice unto idols," then duty demanded that the believer should "eat not for his sake that showed it," out of deference to his conscience, and out of consideration for his personal welfare.

Three classes were liable to injury by such abuse of liberty as was under discussion. The Jew would infer that Christianity was out of harmony with the law and the prophets. The Gentile might infer that their professed abhorrence of idolatry was not genuine, and the weak Christian might be tempted by the example of the stronger, to eat "with conscience of the idol" or to reject the faith altogether, v. 32.

The application of the principle here expounded is wide and varied; Christians are often complacent in maintaining the innocence of various worldly amusements. But if they are innocent are they expedient? Do they conduce to edification? Do they contribute to the strengthening of the weak and purifying of the unholy? Prudence, temperance, cleanness